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ABSTRACT

This longitudinal study examined changes in teaching goals over the past 2 decades. It reviewed data on trends in teaching goals obtained from national surveys of faculty conducted in 1968 by Platt, Parsons, and Kirschstein (3,045 respondents), in 1972 by the American Council on Education (42,000 respondents), in 1984 and 1989 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (5,000 respondents each), and in 1989 and 1992 by the Higher Education Research Institute (approximately 30,000 respondents each). It was found that the goals "develop the ability to think clearly," "prepare students for employment after college," "prepare students for graduate studies," and "provide for students' emotional development" were fairly stable over the 24 years covered by the surveys. Goals were also stable over time when compared by institutional type, although support for preparing students for employment after college grew at liberal arts and comprehensive institutions in the late 1980s and fell at research and two-year institutions. The results indicate a growing divergence between the relatively stable goals of faculty and the changing goals of students, who are placing more emphasis on practical training and job preparation. (Contains 24 references.) (MDM)

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Trends in faculty teaching goals: A longitudinal study of change

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Abstract

This study found that few changes in faculty's undergraduate teaching goals have occurred over a twenty-four year period. Because research shows students' educational goals have changed during this time, recommendations are made for student affairs professionals to become more involved in bridging this growing gap between goals.

Since the founding of the earliest colleges and universities, faculty have been responsible for helping students learn and develop in ways consistent with institutional and social expectations. Although this reality has often been lost in discussions of the contemporary challenges facing colleges and universities, teaching and learning has once again come to the forefront of policy concerns within American higher education.

An important influence on the teaching and learning process within higher education is the goals that faculty have for their students. Not only do these goals help shape curricular structures and the selection of pedagogical methods used to promote them, but these goals are often directly communicated to students. Given the importance of these goals for undergraduate education, the purpose of this study is to examine trends in the teaching goals of undergraduate teaching faculty over the past two and one-half decades. After first reviewing the changing context of American higher education during this period, we examine changes in faculty goals using a longitudinal data set collected from faculty between 1972 and 1992.

Changes among students

The face of American higher education has been altered in significant ways throughout recent decades. One significant shift which has occurred recently concerns the demographics of those enrolled in undergraduate education. Whereas in 1972, 71 percent of college students were between the ages of 18 and 24, that percentage had fallen to 60 percent in 1992 (US Bureau of the Census, 1994). Similarly, a far greater number of first-time students now, as compared to previous decades, attend school part-time, have families, or hold down full-time jobs while completing their degrees.

With these changes in demographics and lifestyles, it is not particularly surprising that overall today's students have quite different goals than those who attended college only two or three decades ago. According to research conducted by the Higher Education

States in "Transforming the State Role in Undergraduate Education" (1986) was to "motivate faculty and reward them for improving undergraduate education," in part by encouraging creativity and risk taking. Another report stated, "Students must become more actively involved in their own learning," perhaps by becoming peer teachers themselves (Boyer, 1987). Whether calling for a return to certain curricular components or seeking more innovative teaching methods, leaders in the field have certainly pushed for changes in the college classroom which may have influenced faculty teaching goals.

Faculty roles, responsibilities, and institutional mission

Before actually examining whether faculty teaching goals have changed over time, it is lastly important to recognize that faculty roles and responsibilities have not remained static (Finkelstein, 1984; Finkelstein, 1990). As institutions of higher education developed in early America, faculty played an integral role in students' lives. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, instructors were responsible not only for the intellectual development of students, but also for their moral and spiritual growth. According to Finkelstein (1984), they were to be both teachers and "shepherds" to the students. During the past few decades, along with the demise of in loco parentis, the number of institutions where faculty are still expected to be "shepherds" has declined substantially.

Institutional roles have also changed throughout this century. Increases in enrollment and a broadening of many universities' missions to include research are just two of these significant changes (Schuster & Bowen, 1985). Although there are indeed long-standing differences across the higher education system (Clark, 1987), these and other changes have contributed to increased differentiation among institutional types (Schuster & Bowen, 1985; Finkelstein, 1990; Smith, 1991). Private liberal arts colleges, for example, clearly have a different mission and culture than large state universities or small rural two-year colleges (Smith, 1991).

The present study

Given the changes in the context of American higher education noted above, the purpose of this study is to address the question of whether faculty have altered their goals for undergraduates in recent years. Moreover, as is the conventional wisdom, do faculty in different types of institutions have different teaching priorities? Have there been differential changes over time by institutional type? After first reviewing the results of previous studies, data from a series of faculty surveys is used to examine whether, in fact, changes in teaching goals have occurred over the past two decades.

Methodology

Two types of analyses were used in this study. First, to gain an overall picture of trends in teaching goals, published reports regarding nationally-representative surveys of college faculty were examined. The first of these surveys was conducted in 1968 by Platt, Parsons, and Kirshstein (Platt, Parsons, & Kirshstein, 1976) and included data from 3045 faculty in 115 in higher education institutions. The 1972 data is from the American Council on Education (ACE; Bayer, 1973), and contains data from some 42,000 faculty within 301 colleges and universities. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching conducted studies in 1984 and 1989 (Carnegie, 1984; Carnegie, 1989), and surveyed some 5,000 faculty nationwide. More recent data on faculty teaching goals was provided by two surveys conducted in 1989 and 1992 by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI; Astin, Korn, & Dey, 1991; Dey, Ramirez, Korn, & Astin, 1992).

Of interest in analyzing published reports was whether there were general shifts in faculty teaching goals over time. All six surveys were used to obtain a broad picture of what changes occurred over a 24 year period. Survey questions which were common to at least three data sets were included in the initial analysis. Data from individual-level responses were used in comparing the results from these six surveys.

The second stage of comparisons were made using a sample of data taken from 98 institutions common to the ACE and HERI surveys. Each of the two HERI surveys used a methodological approach which was similar to that used in the ACE survey and each captured data from 30,000-35,000 faculty at 300-400 institutions. More importantly, the survey instruments were of similar design, and contained a number of identical items related to faculty teaching goals. By aggregating faculty data from the ACE and HERI surveys at the level of the institution, and then merging the aggregated data representing individual institutions, the data set for the institutional-level analyses was created.

Given the temporal proximity of the 1989 and 1992 surveys, we combined these two data sets as if they were one to maximize the overlap with the 1972 data (and therefore the number of cases which were available to analyze). In the 22 cases where data were available for both 1989 and 1992, we averaged the responses across the surveys. By matching the 1972 survey results with those generated by the later surveys, we ended up with a longitudinal data set with information on 98 specific institutions' faculty.

Limitations

Before turning to the results and implications, it is important to keep in mind several limitations. First, the 1968 data from Platt, Parsons, and Kirshstein (1976) were obtained through the use of open-ended questions. Faculty were asked whether they attempted to direct their undergraduate students toward any particular goals. If the answer was yes, they were asked to list one or two of the most important goals. Ranks were then used to display the results, based on the frequency of an item's occurrence in the responses.

The Carnegie studies asked respondents to rate various goals as "very important" "fairly important", "fairly unimportant", or "very unimportant". For our study, only responses in the "very important" category were used. For the ACE and HERI studies, faculty were asked to rate goals on a four-point scale: "Essential," "Very important,"

"Somewhat important," and "Not important." For these surveys, responses in both the "very important" and "essential" categories were included, which may have led to higher absolute percentages being reported, while leaving the overall ranking of the items unchanged.

Sampling limitations should also be pointed out with respect to the 98 institutions common to both the ACE and HERI data sets. First, the 98 institutions which are represented in the later part of the report were not selected through random sampling procedures. Rather, they are a non-random subset of the 1972 institutional participants (which were, however, selected randomly from the population of institutions operating at the time of the survey). Although the institutions in the data set are diverse with respect to type and appear representative of the types of institutions identified by the Carnegie classification, the sample is by strict definition one of convenience. This approach cannot be fully defended on statistical grounds, but our view is that the unique character and value of these data outweigh this concern since we know of no other data sets which show how individual institutions change over time with respect to faculty goals for undergraduates.

Results

The general trends regarding faculty goals are shown in Table 1, and show a somewhat mixed pattern. The goals "Develop the ability to think clearly", "Prepare students for employment after college", "Preparation for graduate studies", "Provide for students' emotional development", and "Help students develop personal values" were all fairly stable over the 24 years covered by the surveys. For example, "Develop the ability to think clearly" was ranked second by faculty in 1968 and then remained in the top position in 1973, 1989, and 1992. The goal of mastering knowledge in a discipline decreased in importance while the goals of developing creativity, increasing the desire for self-directed learning, and conveying a basic appreciation for the liberal arts increased in importance. Rankings for the

goals "Enhancing students' self-understanding" and "Developing moral character" were mixed over the 24 year period.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Table 2, broken down by Carnegie Classification, shows stability over time when the goals are compared within institutional type. (Given the aggregated nature of the data shown in Table 2, we have refrained from calculating tests of significance and have instead chosen to concentrate on basic trends; the n of the analysis is 98 institutions, but these data are generated based on responses from some 16,000 faculty, thereby making the most appropriate way to proceed unclear.) Developing the ability to think clearly increased slightly across all types of institutions, as did developing moral character and enhancing students' self-understanding. Increasing the desire for self-directed learning remained virtually the same or increased in all cases except comprehensive universities where it decreased slightly. Providing for students' emotional development and preparing students for family living decreased across all types of institutions.

Only two items showed somewhat meaningful changes among institutional types. Faculty at comprehensive and liberal arts institutions placed a higher priority on preparing students for employment after college in the late 1980s than they did in 1972. Faculty at Research and two-year institutions, on the other hand, responded that it was <u>less</u> important to prepare students for employment in the late 1980s as compared to 1972. Regarding preparation for graduate studies, only faculty at Research universities placed a slightly lower emphasis on this area in the late 1980s as compared to 1972. Faculty at Comprehensive, Liberal Arts, and two-year colleges all placed a higher priority on this in the late 1980s as compared to 1972. Based on Table 2, one can see that overall, faculty teaching goals have generally moved in the same direction, regardless of institutional type.

[Insert Table 2 about here]

In order to examine these issues directly, we computed a series of multiple regressions for each of the faculty goal items. These were structured so that the relationship between institutional type (as defined by Carnegie Classification) was estimated with the 1989/92 value on the goal, controlling for the 1972 goals. The results are shown in Table 3. The general pattern shows that after controlling for 1972 goals, there is little relative change associated with any of the institutional types considered. The only exception to this is the goal of enhancing students' self-understanding, where significant relative increases were seen for all but the research institutions.

[Insert Table 3 about here]

Discussion and General Implications

Overall, there seems to be much more stability than movement over time when the faculty are aggregated as they are in Table 1. Individual intellectual development seemed to remain a high priority as "Thinking clearly", "Self-directed learning", "Self-understanding", and "Developing creativity" all received consistently high ranks. In the years covered by this survey, although classes continued to grow in size and many faculty spent less time in one-on-one conversations with students, the focus appears to remain on the individual learner and the development of his or her higher-order thinking skills.

Faculty's goal of preparing students for either employment or graduate school has remained quite stable, consistently falling in the mid to lower ranks of the various surveys. Amidst the calls for more general education from some educational leaders, and more practical training from many students, faculty have apparently remained unchanged in their goals. They, as a whole, view intellectual development as more important than future student goals or ambitions.

By breaking faculty responses down by Carnegie Classification (Table 2), more differences do appear. First, the priority of the goal "Prepare students for employment after

college," did fluctuate somewhat by type of institution. Faculty at research universities overall reported a lower priority in this area in 1989/92 as compared to 1972. Two-year college faculty also showed a decrease while liberal arts colleges showed an increase. This may signify a move to comparatively more theory or general education and somewhat less practical information on the part of Research and two-year faculty.

Finally, the goal of developing students' moral character has increased in all classifications. In light of recent literature which has argued that the opposite has occurred, this is a somewhat surprising trend. One reason for the increase may be the specific time period when the first survey was conducted. Compared to the campus culture of the early 1970s, it may be that today's faculty do in fact place a higher priority on developing moral character than 25 years ago.

Another alternative may be that the definition of moral character has changed during this time period. Whereas morals during the 1970s may have referred to concrete values, often religiously based, today's faculty may refer to moral character as a more relativistic concept. In other words, today's faculty may encourage individual ethical development that is not based on any specific moral code, whereas the faculty of the 1970s may have defined moral character more narrowly and concretely.

The results of these surveys reveal somewhat surprising results concerning the stability of faculty undergraduate teaching priorities over three decades. Do these results mean that much of the negative publicity about today's college faculty is unwarranted? Do faculty hold many of the same values that they did in the 1960s and 1970s? Indeed they may. However, one must be careful in interpreting these data that goals and actions are not confused. The results reveal attitudes, not behaviors. Many times the two can be quite different.

Implications for Practice

The teaching goals of college faculty are fundamentally important in shaping the nature and structure of teaching and learning in higher education. This is most obvious in terms of the formal curriculum, as faculty are charged both with its design and implementation. But faculty goals are also important in helping define an institution's more general social and educational environment (Astin, 1993), the totality of which serves to influence student development.

From this study, it is clear that there are overall differences between students' goals of increasingly practical training and faculty's fairly stable priorities of encouraging students' broad intellectual development. This divergence only seems to be widening. How then are these differences to be managed?

Several have suggested that student affairs professionals must play an increasingly important role in bridging this gap. This trend was noted by Boyer (Carnegie, 1986) when he spoke of a widening gap between faculty and student goals. He recommended further developing activities such as orientations and programming in the residence halls to help bridge this gap and better integrate learning experiences for students.

Hurst and Jacobson (1985) recommended that student affairs professionals lead the campus dialogue regarding what constitutes an educated person and how an institution should design environments that will promote the learning process. Student affairs professionals should not simply stand at the side lines watching the gap between faculty and student goals widen. Instead they should be actively involved in working to narrow the gap, as well as providing rich developmental opportunities for college students that will partially fulfill their goals for practical training. According to Hurst and Jacobson, "To assume that intellectual development is the province of the faculty and to assume that the maintenance, control, judicial, and custodial features of student life are the province of student services is a limiting dichotomy" (1985, p. 121).

Others have also pressed for students affairs professionals to be educators, as well as change agents. According to Moore (1991), student affairs professionals need to "communicate the urgency of the developmental mission of higher education to the entire academic community, particularly faculty colleagues" (p. 771). Because of their understanding of developmental theory as well as extensive interaction with students, student affairs professionals are in the best position to understand and articulate today's students' needs. Upon graduation, students want to be prepared for a satisfying career, but parents and students alike recognize that this entails more than simply obtaining vocational knowledge. As stated in the Student Learning Imperative (Astin et al., 1994), "In short, people want to know that higher education is preparing students to lead productive lives after college"
(p. 1).

Social, emotional, and moral development are also components of a mature adult. This study demonstrates that over recent decades, faculty have consistently valued intellectual development. However, their interest, knowledge, or comfort with working to develop other aspects of the whole student was not as clear. Student affairs professionals need to be involved in the educational dialogue. They can play a key role as change agents for the institution. They can educate faculty and administrators regarding developmental theories. Finally, they can expand co-curricular activities that will further develop the whole student.

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Table 1
Faculty teaching goals as recorded by rank from six national surveys: 1968 to 1989/92

	Year of Survey					
Faculty goal	1968	1973	1984	1989	1989	1992
Master knowledge in a discipline	1	2	6	4	-*	-
Develop ability to think clearly	2	1	-	-	1	1
Develop moral character	3	9	-	-	6	6
Prepare students for employment after college	4	5	5	5	5	3
Develop creativity	5	4	2	1	-	-
Preparation for graduate studies	6	8	-	-	7	7
Increase desire for self-directed learning	7	3	-	-	2	2
Enhance students' self-understanding	-	6	1	-	3	4
Convey basic appreciation for the Liberal Arts	-	7	3	2	-	-
Provide for students' emotional development	-	10	-	-	8	8
Help students develop personal values	-	-	4	3	4	5

* Question not included in this survey

Table 2
Change in faculty teaching goals by institutional type: 1972 to 1989/92

	Carnegie Type									
	All		Research		Comprehensive		Liberal arts		Two-year	
Faculty goal	72	89/92	72	89/92	72	89/92	72	89/92	72	89/92
Develop ability to think clearly	3.67	3.87	3.67	3.85	3.68	3.86	3.67	3.90	3.55	3.80
Develop moral character	2.55	2.75	2.29	2.51	2.70	2.87	2.57	2.77	2.73	2.78
Prepare students for employment after college	2.68	2.68	2.76	2.59	2.76	2.78	2.51	2.59	3.24	3.19
Preparation for graduate studies	2.61	2.63	2.60	2.57	2.61	2.64	2.66	2.68	2.23	2.41
Increase desire for self-directed learning	3.51	3.53	3.52	3.52	3.53	3.49	3.51	3.55	3.16	3.32
Enhance students' self-understanding	2.75	2.91	2.47	2.66	2.87	2.95	2.81	2.99	2.79	2.87
Provide for students' emotional development	2.40	2.35	2.14	2.12	2.50	2.41	2.44	2.41	2.60	2.39
Prepare students for family living	1.90	1.80	1.62	1.57	2.06	1.91	1.90	1.81	2.18	1.96

Note: Two-year means are from entire sample, all other means are from 98 institutions as aggregated data.

Table 3
Standardized regression coefficients between institutional type and 1989/92 goal (controlling for 1972 goal)

	Research	Comprehensive	Liberal arts	Two-year
Develop ability to think clearly	-.2543	-.2274	.1503	-.3215
Develop moral character	-.2122	-.1684	-.1488	-.1382
Prepare students for employment after college	-.0436	.0757	.1048	.1442
Preparation for graduate studies	-.1147	.0349	.1393	-.1155
Increase desire for self-directed learning	-.1710	-.0165	.2003	.0118
Enhance students' self-understanding	.1721	.5295 **	.6829 ***	.2246 *
Provide for students' emotional development	-.0657	.0894	.1599	-.0311
Prepare students for family living	-.1657	-.1134	-.0848	-.0540

Note: $p < .01$, ***; $p < .05$, **; $p < .10$, *.